**What makes a one-tap game fun?**

One-tap games, to me, seem to revolve around the idea of either curiosity and/or gratification. While it isn’t a one tap game, the game that gets this point across best is Cookie Clicker. This game is constantly showering the player with upgrades and rewards, while holding new upgrades and rewards for the player in front of them like a carrot on a stick. Cookie Clicker uses satisfying sound effects and animations to tell the player they are doing a good job, and by doing this, Cookie Clicker keeps the player invested in the game with quick second-by-second endorphin hits. A couple one tap examples I found that use a similar system are Jetpack Joyride and Rooms of Doom, both of which I recommend checking out.

Another similarity between a good 90% of all the one-tap games I’ve played is the infinite runner system, in that the game keeps going until the player fails. Most of these games use a high-score system, enticing a player to find gratification through mastery.

**Addictive Games**

Another trend I found in one-tap games is this idea that the game needs to be addictive. A game that demonstrates this well is another infinite runner style game, Break Liner. The objective of break liner is very simple, the player controls a little rocket ship on the screen that repeatedly breaks through a wall in the centre of the screen, zig zagging back and forth through the wall with repeated taps on the screen from the player. Not every part of the wall is breakable, meaning the player can crash into a wall and fail the game. This plus the steady introduction of new mechanics over the first 30 levels give the game a clear learn, practice and master loop.

Many design decisions in the game lend themselves to the addictive nature of Break Liner. First and most importantly is that the gameplay loop is never broken. When the player crashes his little rocket ship, the player is returned to the title screen, transitioned with a slick animation as opposed to a hard cut. From there, the player can resume playing by clicking again, and straight into a new run they go. The only thing that disrupts the gameplay loop is ads, infuriatingly enough.

**Aesthetic**

As far as aesthetics for one tap titles go, they’re either one of two things: Completely simplistic, using basic shapes and an analogous colour scheme as the base of their graphics; or, they’re very cartoony and colourful, where a sizable chunk of the characters are animals, with a big emphasis on slapstick comedy.

Personally, I’m more into the simple aesthetics. Not only would they be easier to replicate for us, but they lend themselves to just about any game mechanic we can think of. That is, of course, if we choose to go with either of these aesthetics for our own title.

**Audio**

Audio used in the games I sampled very much went hand in hand with the aesthetic. The more cartoony titles like Rooms of Doom and Jetpack Joyride featured more conventionally ‘wackier’ music and sound effects, whereas the more simplistic ones, such as One More Line, Stack and Break Liner, all featured more serene and quieter sounds, only picking up in volume on player achievement to compliment the endorphin hit.

**My Idea**

The infinite runner gameplay of many one tap games on mobile right now will be easy for us to replicate on Unity, thus I believe it should be the basis for our game.

Since our brief requires a game with symmetry, I would like to propose an idea that revolves around a pendulum, swinging back and forth. With one tap, the pendulum is knocked into the opponent’s side of the screen. A well-timed tap would allow a player to pass through a debuff for his opponent, making their next tap harder to aim, or a buff for themselves. Hazards in the middle of the screen will break the pendulum if it knocks into them.

At the start of each round, both players would be allotted 60 total seconds the pendulum can stay on their side of the screen. If their timer hits 0, they are timed out, and the opponent wins. This mechanic serves to stop rounds from lasting forever, as well as to suit the theme of clocks and time.

The goal of the game is to have the pendulum break on your opponent’s side, or for your opponent to hold the pendulum on their side too long that they time out. Games could potentially last multiple rounds, in best of threes or fives, although the number of rounds could possibly be adjusted by the players. There would not be much of a game between rounds so as not to disrupt the flow of the game state.

As I mentioned before, the game would feature pickups. Positive ones could include increasing your timer, slowing your timer for the next round or slowing how fast the hazards in the middle move. Negative pickups that affect your opponent would be the opposite of those effects, as well as a debuff that would move the pendulum up and down on their side of the screen.

Aesthetically, simple graphics like what I have discussed would work well. Simple shapes, easily readable, clearly defined so that the players always have a grasp of what is happening on screen.